

**LISTING OF THE CLAIMS**

1-26 (Cancelled)

27. (Previously Presented) A remote terminal in an asynchronous transfer mode network, comprising:

a first path for receiving a first cell with a first plurality of components;

a second path for receiving a second cell with a second plurality of components;

a first multiplexer for routing received first and second cells to and from an asynchronous feeder multiplexer, the asynchronous feeder multiplexer for replacing less than all of the first plurality of components in the first cell with less than all of the second plurality of components in the second cell.

28. (Previously Presented) The remote terminal of claim 27, wherein the asynchronous feeder multiplexer includes protection logic adapted to compare the first cell with the second cell to select a cell to be output.

29. (Previously Presented) The remote terminal of claim 28, wherein the protection logic selects for the output the cell which remains after a loss of signal for at least one of the first cell and the second cell has been detected.

30. (Previously Presented) The remote terminal of claim 28, wherein the protection logic selects for the output the cell having a best signal quality.

31. (Previously Presented) The remote terminal of claim 28, wherein the cell to be output includes at least one of the first plurality of components and at least one of the second plurality of components.

32. (Previously Presented) The remote terminal of claim 31, wherein the selected components in the cell for output are selected based on a best signal quality of the components.

33. (Previously Presented) The remote terminal of claim 27, wherein the remote terminal is a portion of a network.

34. (Previously Presented) The remote terminal of claim 33, wherein the network is a synchronous optical network (SONET).

35. (Previously Presented) The remote terminal of claim 34, wherein the network employs at least an STS-1 optical bandwidth.

36. (Previously Presented) The remote terminal of claim 33, wherein the network includes metallic channels in the first path and the second path.

37. (Previously Presented) The remote terminal of claim 36, wherein the network employs DS3 bandwidth.

38. (Previously Presented) A method of communication at a remote terminal in an asynchronous transfer mode network, comprising:

receiving a first cell with a first plurality of components from a downstream path;

receiving a second cell with a second plurality of components from an upstream path; and

replacing less than all of the first plurality of components in the first cell with less than all of the second plurality of components in the second cell.

39. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 38, further comprising:

outputting the first cell including replaced components on at least one of the downstream path and the upstream path.

40. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 38, wherein the replacing is determined by a signal characteristic of the first plurality of components and the second plurality of components.

41. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 40, wherein the signal characteristic is a best signal quality.

42. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 40, wherein the signal characteristic is a remaining signal after a signal loss.

43. (Previously Presented) A method of communication at a remote terminal in an asynchronous transfer mode network including the remote terminal of claim 27.